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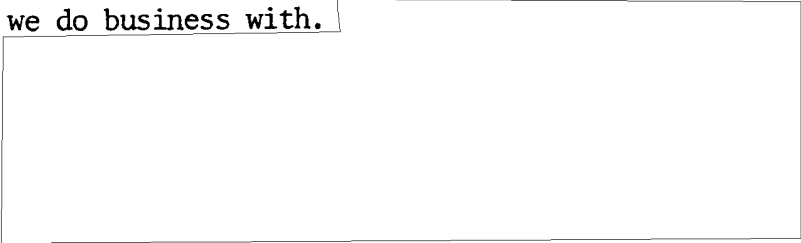
Directorate of Intelligence
Office of African and Latin American Analysis

25 September 1985

NOTE FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence

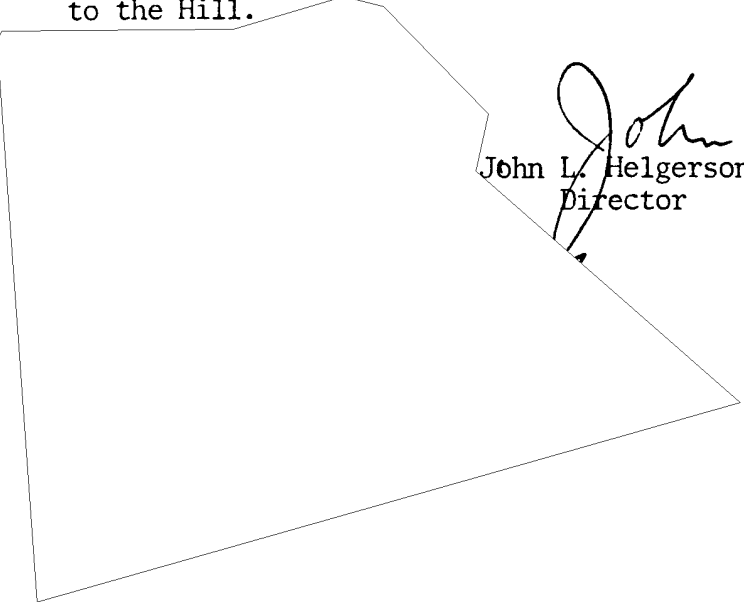
Bob,


Attached are copies of a blind memorandum on human rights in Nicaragua we recently prepared for Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams. Since Abrams will likely draw from this unclassified report in any testimony on the subject, we felt it appropriate to send copies of the documents to the various committees on the Hill we do business with.



STAT

If you have no problem with this approach, we will see to it that Legislative Liaison gets the packet of signed memoranda for transmission to the Hill.




John L. Helgersen
Director

STAT

Identical notes and attachments were sent to:

Mr. Bernard F. McMahon
Staff Director
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
Room 211
Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Mr. Thomas K. Latimer
Staff Director
House Permanent Select Committee
on Intelligence
Room H-405
The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Mr. John J. Brady, Jr.
Staff Director
House Foreign Affairs Committee
Room 2170
Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Mr. Jeffrey T. Bergner
Staff Director
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Room 440
Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Mr. John G. Plashal
Subcommittee on Defense
House Appropriations Committee
Room H-144
The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ms. Susan E. Shekmar
Subcommittee on Defense
Senate Appropriations Committee
Room 119
Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

SUBJECT: The Organized Subversion of Human Rights in Nicaragua

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The Organized Subversion of Human Rights in Nicaragua

18 September 1985

Summary

Extensive reporting and documentation from a Nicaraguan defector--who until late 1983 was personally involved in investigating human rights abuses for the Interior Ministry--offers a unique, inside perspective to the Sandinistas' institutionalization of human rights abuses. Interior Minister Tomas Borge, almost certainly operating with the approval of the Sandinista Directorate, is the primary authorizing official, and is central in covering up the abuses. Reporting of violations from other knowledgeable individuals, including former security officers and locals, strengthens the credibility of this defector.

In 1981, admitting privately that indiscriminate executions had been widespread since the Sandinista triumph in 1979, Borge issued a directive reserving to himself and his second-in-command, Deputy Interior Minister Luis Carrion, the authority to apply "special measures"--a euphemism for execution. Borge and Carrion have sanctioned the killing of prisoners, dissidents, suspected insurgent collaborators, and Indians and peasants who resisted Sandinista policies. They also have protected government officials involved in such abuses, even when the perpetrators had not received prior authorization. In addition, Borge has created several bureaucratic mechanisms intended to deflect international criticism of the human rights situation in Nicaragua, and several cases that have been brought to public light apparently have been intended only for propaganda impact, with the perpetrators subsequently freed.

* * *

Lt. Alvaro Jose Baldizon Aviles, a former official of the Nicaraguan Interior Ministry who defected in July 1985, has provided detailed testimony on the Sandinistas' institutionalized abuse of human rights. Baldizon served as a human rights investigator in the Sandinista police and the Interior Ministry's General Directorate of State Security (DSGE) from early 1982 until late 1983. His reports are based on his own experiences,

those of his colleagues, and documents removed from ministry files when he left Nicaragua. Some of the incidents are verified by other observers and a range of other reporting attests to human rights violations by the Sandinista regime.

Borge, according to Baldizon, promulgated a secret order in 1981 that standardized the application of "special measures," or summary execution, to end what he called the "anarchical fashion" in which such acts had been carried out since 1979. The directive required that:

- Only Borge or Carrion authorize the executions.
- The term "special measures" replace terms such as "shooting" and "execution."
- "Special measures" be proposed only by the senior Interior Ministry regional official, in writing and submitted 72 hours before the planned action.
- No one whose detention was public knowledge be executed.
- The same personnel--highly motivated, carefully screened and monitored FSLN loyalists--always carry out the executions.
- The senior regional Interior Ministry official be responsible for enforcing rules and repairing "damage inflicted on the prestige" of the revolution by any revelations.

High-Level Involvement

Baldizon claims that Borge and Carrion have been directly involved in several executions:

- In 1980, a close associate who had helped to cover up killings by Interior Ministry officials told Baldizon that Borge had ordered the assassination of private sector business leader Jorge Salazar earlier that year. This account is corroborated by a previous defector from the security service.
- In 1981, Borge planned the assassination of a group of Nicaraguan asylees in the Guatemalan Embassy in Managua. A Sandinista security agent posing as a refugee persuaded

the asylees they could sneak out of the country. They were quickly apprehended, interrogated, and executed:

- In mid-1981, Borge promised eight inmates of the Zona Franca prison there would be no reprisals if they ended their uprising. After the facility was secured, however, Borge ordered that they be killed. An earlier defector from state security also reported this incident, and other individuals have witnessed routine mistreatment of inmates, including torture, prolonged isolation, and starvation.
- In December 1982, Carrion approved the execution of a 20-year-old youth accused of aiding the insurgents.
- In February 1983, Carrion authorized the execution of a peasant farmer who was a suspected insurgent collaborator in Jinotega. The local Interior Ministry delegate had applied for permission to use "special measures" because he lacked any legal case for killing his prisoner.
- During 1983, Borge routinely approved requests for the application of "special measures" against more than 300 farmers in Jinotega and Matagalpa Departments, where a major pacification campaign was underway. Reports from a variety of other individuals underscore the regime's brutalization of peasants in northern combat zones.
- In late 1983, Borge ordered reprisals against peasants in an area where a Sandinista patrol had been ambushed. About a dozen peasants were killed in subsequent sweep operations, and another 50 were taken prisoner and tortured. Ten of these were later shot and buried in a clandestine cemetery.

Local Actions

Although Borge and Carrion personally approved many of the executions, they also gave considerable latitude to local military and security officials. In the Indian region along the Atlantic coast, for example, the Defense and Interior Ministries established a special commission with authority to determine the fate of Indian prisoners. The source reported only one series of executions--in 1982--authorized directly by the commission. In many instances, local commanders, apparently operating independently, approved the killings. Other observers, including international human rights groups, substantiate the mistreatment

of the Miskitos, and another defector reports that such practices remain state policy:

- In December 1981, Army and state security officials executed over 30 Indian prisoners as reprisals for the deaths of Army troops during an operation against the Misura Indian guerrilla group in northern Zelaya Department. Another state security defector also reported this incident.
- In June 1982, Sandinista troops occupied a number of Indian villages in the same region, killing male prisoners and raping the women.
- In July 1982, military and state security officers killed "large numbers" of Indians captured during a Sandinista counteroffensive.
- Between July and October 1982, while investigating this incident, officials of the Interior Ministry's Directorate of Internal Affairs learned of the existence of the special commission and determined that it authorized the executions of over 100 Indians believed to be Misura guerrillas.
- In March 1984, a company of Sandinista troops occupied a Miskito Indian village in northern Zelaya Department for a month, imprisoning the men in the local church and raping the women.

Covering Up

Protecting the Perpetrators. Baldizon reports that Borge has institutionalized the protection of human rights violators within the Interior Ministry. In December 1982, Borge created the Special Investigations Committee (CIE) to replace the Foreign Ministry as the focal point for investigating allegations of human rights abuses. The CIE was intended to counter the activities of the independent Nicaraguan Permanent Human Rights Commission, which had reported the Sandinistas' lack of cooperation on human rights issues to the Inter-American Human Rights Committee of the OAS. When the CIE told Borge that most of the allegations were true, he responded by ordering his assistants to prepare false, plausible reports that would protect the government. In December 1983, the CIE was upgraded to a Special Investigations Section (SIE) and given added responsibility for looking into allegations of criminal activity by police.

In late 1984, the SIE was superceded by the Directorate of Internal Affairs (DAI), which, under Borge's supervision, carried out inquiries into human rights abuses. Although the investigating teams often found overwhelming evidence, in most cases Borge simply failed to follow up on the findings, even when the guilty were acting without orders. In a few instances, for public consumption, Borge allowed some of the perpetrators to be brought to trial. Even when long sentences were meted out, however, no one served more than a few months in prison. For example:

- In December 1981, six soldiers were convicted of killing 30 Miskito Indians and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. They were freed by the regime within several months.
- In September 1982, investigators learned that Sandinista troops had arrested and executed four Miskitos without authorization, but Borge took no action on the report.
- In December 1982, Borge, under intense international pressure, ordered his ministry to investigate the deaths of over 100 Indians during a sweep operation in northern Zelaya. The officials found extensive evidence of abuses but noted that the special commission with jurisdiction over the Indians had ordered the killings. The report was forwarded to Borge in June 1983, but no action was taken.
- In December 1982, Borge ordered an inquiry into the death of an alleged guerrilla supporter. The investigators noted that Carrion had ordered the execution, and Borge pursued the matter no further.
- In 1983, again under intense pressure from human rights groups, Borge authorized an inquiry into allegations that military and state security personnel had executed 300 farmers. The investigating team prepared a thorough report implicating numerous local officials and Carrion, who authorized the killings. Only four persons were brought to trial by the special prosecutor appointed by Borge. All were released soon after being found guilty, and those who had issued the orders were transferred to other posts.
- In November 1983, inquiries from human rights groups prompted Borge to order an investigation into the death of a farmer in Jinotega. Although the report implicated a local security official, Borge took no action because the

official had obtained Carrion's authorization to apply "special measures."

- In late 1983, the killers of two religious workers in the south were sentenced to 30 years in prison but freed two months later.

Deflecting International Criticism. Efforts to contain international inquiries into human rights abuses also fall to Borge, according to Baldizon. State security frequently has manufactured evidence to justify the actions of security officials, and Borge has lied in public to cover human rights violations. For example:

- In 1980, a section within state security's Operations Department planted weapons and other incriminating evidence near the body of assassinated private sector leader Jorge Salazar to make it appear he had died in a fight with the police.
- In 1981, Borge published a communique asserting that eight prison inmates--who had actually been executed for their part in a prison riot--had been killed during the disturbance.
- In 1982, Borge gave the chief of the Sandinista police the authority to use fake evidence to justify detaining dissidents for up to two years.
- In late 1983, Borge publicly stated that 10 prisoners had been killed in combat, but actually they had been executed.

In 1984, Borge formed the Technical Commission to coordinate the flow of inquiries between the Interior Ministry and the Foreign Ministry, which still issued responses to foreign human rights groups. The new commission was staffed with Borge loyalists who helped to fabricate many of the responses disseminated by the Foreign Ministry to satisfy external inquiries. The Technical Commission also has been responsible for preparing itineraries for human rights delegations, according to the defector. A key member of the Technical Commission is Sixto Ulloa, Director of the Evangelical Committee for Development and reportedly a state security agent since 1981. Ulloa's strong defense of the regime's human rights record has had considerable impact on visiting delegations unaware of his allegiance, according to Baldizon.

Borge's operatives--including Ulloa--have worked in the pro-government Nicaraguan Committee for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, which, according to the source, also helps to contain international human rights inquiries. It accepts complaints from citizens and forwards them to the Interior Ministry, siphoning off grievances that otherwise would have gone to the independent human rights group. Furthermore, it has helped the Technical Commission orchestrate the visits of foreign delegations. Local state security officers remove any potential troublemakers before the delegations arrive.